



Attachments (1)

# THE DAMNED CHILDREN

*A Layman's Guide to  
Forcing Change in Public Education*

by  
**Julius W. Hobson**

*Director, Washington Institute for  
Quality Education (WIQE)*

This is the first in a series of publications  
about THE DAMNED in our society







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Photos by George de Vincent

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## Preface

It is generally understood that education does not equally benefit all school children. It is less well understood that those who are disadvantaged by the process of education are almost invariably poor and Black school children. This does not come about because of happenstance or by differences in capacity to learn; it is quite directly related to the shoddy treatment that the poor and the Black receive from the public schools.

This publication makes plain this sad state of affairs. It takes a careful look at the practices of one school system—the Washington, D.C. public schools—and concludes that, by *any* objectively verifiable measure, that system values the education of its middle-class children more highly than the education of the poor. Whatever the indices—money spent, textbooks available, availability of honors programs, ability to read and write—the conclusion is the same: the poor suffer at the hands of the schools.

The publication's more important point is that people—*parents and citizens concerned about the state of American education*—can change these discriminatory practices. It indicates what in-

formation they need, and how to go about getting that information. It suggests a disarmingly simple remedy for existing inequities: even-handed treatment of *all* children, Black and White, poor and rich.

The problems that are pointed out are by no means limited to Washington, D.C. schools; with minor variations, they are a fact of life in all American school systems. They demand action: finding out how the local school system treats its clientele, publishing those findings, demanding changes in present practices. Ultimately, they demand a shift in control over education from the bureaucrats to the community to those primarily affected by the process of education. The kind of information called for in this pamphlet—how education dollars are allocated, how students are grouped, who gets what—is a crucial first step.

David L. Kirp, *Director*  
Center for Law and Education  
Harvard University  
July 1970







## Introduction

Large urban school systems in the United States have traditionally consigned the poor and the Black children to the social and economic junk heap. This goal has been accomplished through a variety of vehicles, some obvious, like simple segregation by race, others more subtle, such as an unequal distribution of educational resources, rigid tracking, and inferior physical plants.

Parents and other community groups have continuously tried to combat these injustices which place some children at an early disadvantage in dealing with life. However, because of the traditional sanctuary of professional educators who resent and resist questions and the involvement of non-educators in their special preserve, the community has been at a great disadvantage in attempting educational reform.

Because of lack of substantive information, interested adults have usually been side-tracked into debating qualities not measurable such as teacher attitudes and sensitivity to children, curriculum content, and the responsibility of the parent versus that of the school. Professional educators, arguing that the educational process is indeed complicated and cannot be understood by non-educators, have been left virtually free to perform their mysterious functions in isolation from community accountability.

This publication has been developed to provide non-educators, parents, and community groups with tools to evaluate measurable quantities in the educational process. Although these tools will not insure the "quality" of education, once equity in educational resources is established, parents can more easily attack other qualities not so easily defined. The tools identified here will probably be most useful to individuals who have engaged in the education fight along many fronts and who already understand the practiced ability of school board officials to talk fast, flip charts and provide 300 page reports while the schools continue to deteriorate. The evaluation and analysis of data outlined on the following pages are presented as examples of what can be done by parents and teachers using simple "grocery store arithmetic" in almost

any urban school in the United States. Public education is traced graphically from the composition of the Board of Education to "Johnny's" ability to read. These examples of measurable quantities have been recognized as valid tools to improve the educational process by the Congress of the United States, the United States District Court, and the United States Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia.

The 1967 *Hobson v. Hansen* school case, upheld in the United States Court of Appeals in the District of Columbia, was based on statistical evidence that measured, among other things, assignment of teachers, expenditures per pupils, distribution of books and supplies, utilization of homogeneous ability grouping methods, and utilization of classroom space. When related to the color of the population and the economic level of the neighborhoods where schools are located, the data used in these measures showed definite patterns of racial and economic discrimination.

While Washington schools are probably worse than most in the country, the patterns of discrimination are fairly typical of city schools elsewhere. Therefore, a similar pattern of developing data as outlined on the following pages is suggested as the form and content which lay parent groups and organizations might adopt, at least initially, in their effort to gain an accounting of the quality of education in the large cities.

Although many city school systems assert they do not have these data, it is very likely that they do. The intelligence needed to administer large school systems requires that officials, particularly those overseeing school finances, must have such information. In most states, these data are considered public information by law and can be obtained through legal procedures if necessary. The date of the data is not important for purposes of this publication—it is rather the tested pattern of collecting information to achieve educational reform which is significant. The new census information scheduled for publication in 1971 will provide excellent up-to-date economic bases for new measurements. Parent



groups and those outside the official school administrations cannot hope to fully understand what is measurably happening to their children without access to these forms of information. Any attack on the deteriorating educational system in large American cities must begin from a factual basis.

Since unequal conditions have prevailed throughout the entire history of public education in large cities, such conditions appear to show a deliberate design to keep Black and poor children in a process which should be called "programmed retardation". At the same time, professional educators blame the children for their inability to learn under measurably adverse conditions. Indeed, primary and secondary public education in large cities in the United States operates as the only major industry in which the consumer (the child) is held responsible for the quality of the product.

Since much of the information in this publication is quantitative rather than qualitative, it may be assumed that some authorities on evaluation will raise eyebrows regarding these types of data since they are computational in nature and do not get at changes in learning or at the dynamics of school curricula or organization. The latter point is recognized by the Washington Institute for Quality Education and the justification for using such measures is that—as a first step—these data readily reveal a measurable flow in inequity practiced in public education which can serve as a starting point for parents and lay groups attempting to save the children.

Education is a big industry and should be administered as such. For example, Washington schools have an average annual budget (funds from all sources) of about \$150,000,000, approximately 18,000 employees, 150,000 students (about 94% Black) and more than 200 school buildings. The following charts are based solely upon data collected from the Washington public school administration and the United States Census Bureau. They provide nothing more than an elementary decision-making, management tool essential to an operating organization; such graphic presentations

should become part of the normal computerized collection of data annually made available to parents and taxpayers.

The analyses of the very simple bar charts presented in this publication do not require any expertise or higher learning. They are merely computations of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division and can easily be duplicated by parent groups in cities throughout the United States. Parents may also choose to develop and evaluate other measurable data on subjects such as equal vocational opportunities, essential equipment inventories, participation in special programs and even suspensions and absenteeism by school.

Such terms as "average expenditure per pupil" and "dropout rate" should not discourage the lay citizen, since these are generally understood concepts defined for school administrators by the National Education Association and the United States Office of Education. However, citizens should not expect enthusiastic cooperation by educators. Even prying the basic information presented in the following charts out of a defensive Washington school administration required court orders and Congressional requests. A common reason given for not maintaining such data is its cost. The fact is that educators cannot fairly administer a school system without such information.

The question is always raised as to whether the distribution of quantitative resources is related directly to the achievement levels of children. While we welcome debate on this question, the data presented graphically herein indicate that there is probably a high positive correlation between lower expenditures per pupil—unequal resources—and lower reading levels which effectively prevent "Johnny" from reading, writing, and communicating in our world. We recommend that citizens increasingly request the following information from their public school system—as a first step in defining measurable progress toward change.

Mrs. Tina C. Hobson, *Chairman*  
Washington Institute for Quality Education







## The School Board

### question:

*What has been the racial composition of the Washington, D.C. Board of Education?*

### answer:

**At the present time, a majority of the 11-member Board of Education is Black. For sixty years Black members were a minority on the Board. Only recently have Blacks assumed a majority status.**

### analysis:

In 1906, the United States Congress granted federal judges of the United States District Court of the District of Columbia the authority to appoint members of the school board. These judges then apparently used a racial quota system in the appointment of individual members from 1906 through 1968. Chart 1 shows that from 1906 through 1961, one-third of the board members were Black (33%). From 1962 through 1966, the judges decided to increase Black appointees to four or 44%. In 1967 and 1968, five out of nine appointees or 56% were Black.

As the result of a pending suit before the United States Supreme Court charging these federal judges with engaging in a political and unconstitutional act by appointing the school board, the United States Congress rushed in to pass Public Law 90-292 in 1968, which allowed the election of an eleven-member school board. The chart shows that eight or 73% of the eleven members elected in 1969 were Black.

While this chart does not so indicate, the point clearly made in subsequent charts is that the deteriorating conditions of the Washington public schools have been presided over by both Black and White majorities.

Racism practiced under the segregated conditions in the schools, prior to the Supreme Court decision banning segregation in 1954, undoubtedly created the initial conditions which have contributed to the destruction of poor and Black children. But from 1967 to the present, Black majorities have continued this destruction. In fact, the fight for better education in the schools has been a class struggle on behalf of the vast majority of the children, who come from the low income communities, against middle-class Blacks and Whites.



# Percent Distribution of Members of the Board of Education, by Race, 1906-1970



Note: 1906 through 1968, the Board of Education consisted of 9 members, all appointed by U.S. District Court Judges. 1969 to present, the Board consists of 11 members, all elected by D.C. residents as result of a law enacted by the U.S. Congress.

Source: D.C. Board of Education



## Teacher Assignment

question:

*Which schools are assigned the largest proportion of the “more qualified” teachers?*

answer:

**The Washington school administration traditionally assigns the “more qualified” teachers to schools located in communities with the highest income levels.**

analysis:

There are three main categories of teachers in the Washington public schools: permanent, probationary, and temporary. “Permanent” teachers have passed the qualifying examination, have met all the academic requirements, and have served a specified probationary period. “Probationary” teachers have passed the qualifying examination and have also met all of the academic requirements, but are still serving a specified probationary period. “Temporary” teachers, for the most part, have not passed or cannot pass the required examination to become permanent and may not have the required academic qualifications.

Chart 2 shows the percent of “temporary” teachers in the elementary schools by neighborhood income groups for the school year 1965. The chart indicates that as the economic level of the neighborhood declined, the percentage of temporary teachers assigned to the schools in those neighborhoods increased. In the poorest community where the income was \$3,999 and under, 46% of the teachers were temporary in 1965; while in the community where the

income range was from \$11,000 to \$11,999, only 19% of the teachers were temporary. Temporary teachers, as defined by the school administration, are the least qualified and, as the data show, were assigned primarily to the poorest communities.

The distribution of permanent teachers is, of course, the other side of the coin. Chart 3 shows that in 1969, despite a U.S. court order directing the D.C. school board to equalize facilities, and despite an elected board which was 73% Black, the same general pattern of discrimination still prevailed. In 1969, the elementary schools in the poorest communities with income levels of \$3,999 and under had 45% permanent teachers. The \$6,000 to \$6,999 community had a low of 41% permanent teachers assigned to their elementary schools. The elementary schools located in the neighborhood where the income range was \$10,000 to \$10,999 contained 59% permanent teachers and well over half of the teachers assigned to the \$11,000 to \$11,999 and the \$12,000 and over income communities were permanent.



Chart 2. D.C. Elementary Schools

**Percent of TEMPORARY Teachers,  
by Neighborhood Income Groups, 1965**

60%

50%

40%

30%

20%

10%

0

\$3,999 & under  
\$4,000-4,999  
\$5,000-5,999  
\$6,000-6,999  
\$7,000-7,999  
\$8,000-8,999  
\$9,000-9,999  
\$10,000-10,999  
\$11,000-11,999  
\$12,000 & up

**Neighborhood Income Groups**

Source: House Committee on Education and Labor

Chart 3. D.C. Elementary Schools

**Percent of PERMANENT Teachers,  
by Neighborhood Income Groups, 1969**

\$3,999 & under  
\$4,000-4,999  
\$5,000-5,999  
\$6,000-6,999  
\$7,000-7,999  
\$8,000-8,999  
\$9,000-9,999  
\$10,000-10,999  
\$11,000-11,999  
\$12,000 & up

**Neighborhood Income Groups**

Source: D.C. Public Schools



## Teacher Assignment

question:

*Do teacher assignment patterns reflect racial segregation?*

answer:

**In Washington before 1967, the White teachers were assigned primarily to the White schools and the Black teachers were assigned primarily to the Black schools.**

analysis:

Chart 4 shows the degree of teacher segregation in all White and predominantly White elementary schools from 1961-62 through 1965-66. In 1961-62, 9% of the teachers in predominantly White elementary schools were Black. By the school year 1962-63, this proportion had risen to 14% but steadily declined to a low of 3% by the school year 1965-66.

In 1967, the United States District Court ordered that the practice of teacher racial segregation cease. The school administration was ordered to integrate the faculties. Data for 1969 show that there have been some changes. However, there are still completely seg-

regated faculties teaching in the Washington public schools. Most of these segregated faculties are all Black, but it is significant that the Board of Education has consistently maintained the all White composition of the Capitol Page School.

Although experiences in the Black community give substance to the desires of some Black parents to have Black teachers teaching their children, the fact still remains that justice and fairness can prevail only if school teachers are assigned solely on the basis of merit.

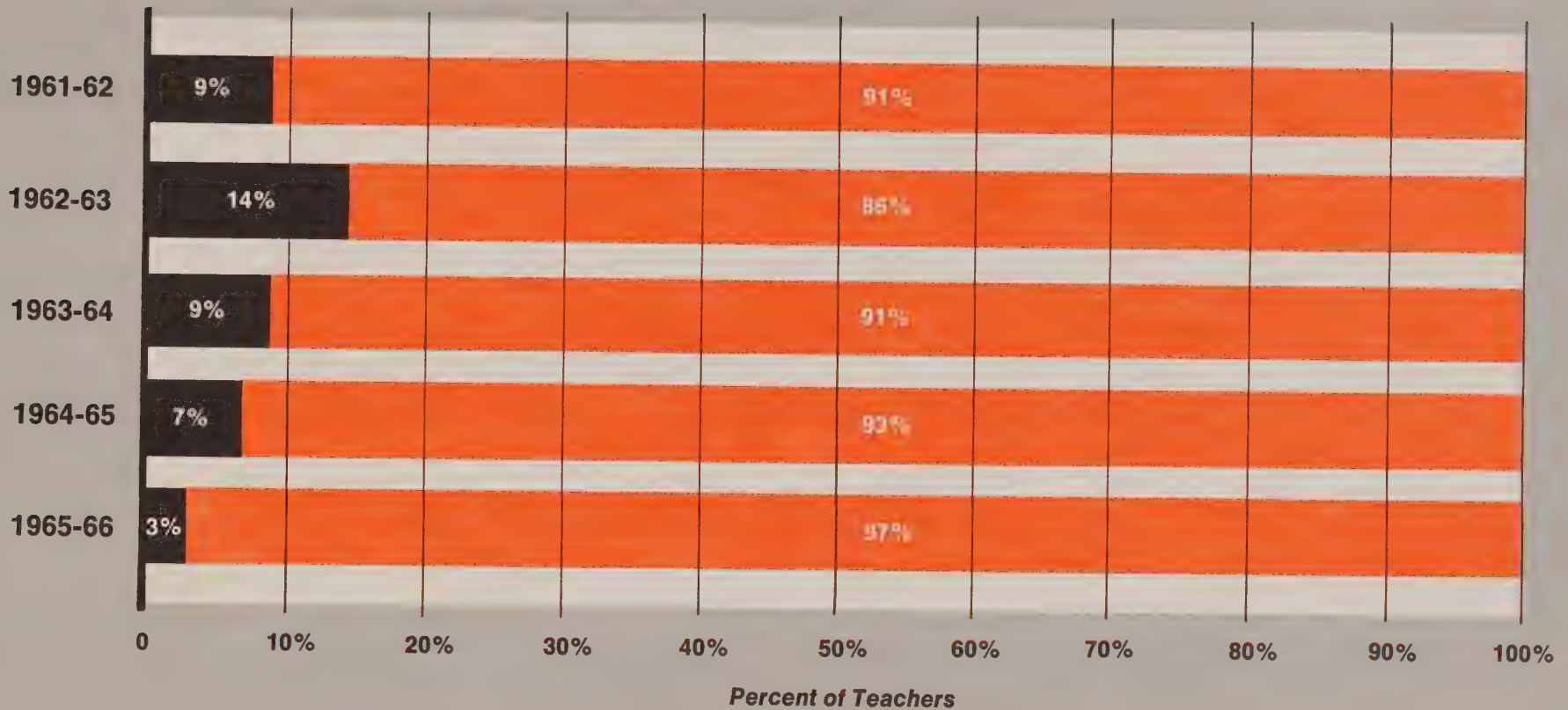


Chart 4. *D.C. Elementary Schools*

## Degree of Teachers Segregation in All-White and Predominantly White Schools

School Years 1961-62 to 1965-66

Black Teachers White Teachers



School Year	No. of Schools	No. of Teachers		
		White	Black	
1961-62	23	310	31	74% of the 23 schools had all-white faculties
1962-63	23	298	49	74% of the 23 schools had all-white faculties
1963-64	19	249	25	79% of the 19 schools had all-white faculties
1964-65	18	240	17	72% of the 18 schools had all-white faculties
1965-66	14	184	5	71% of the 14 schools had all-white faculties

Source: D.C. Public Schools



## The Children—“Ability Grouping”

### question:

*What was the nature of the system of grouping students used in the Washington public schools and on what basis were the children assigned to the various groups?*

### answer:

**The “track system” in the Washington public schools segregated students according to rigid and individually distinct curriculums: basic, general, regular, and honors tracks. This inflexible means of assigning children to one of four arbitrary learning levels started in the first grade and extended throughout the students’ school experiences. The school system placed children in these tracks on the basis of the economic level of their neighborhoods.**

### analysis:

Chart 5 shows the median family income and pupil placement in the District of Columbia senior high schools for the school year 1963-64. The chart shows that as the median family income of the neighborhoods increased, the percentage of high school students in those neighborhoods who were in the basic and general tracks decreased. In the poorest communities in Washington where the median family income was \$3,872, 85% of the children were placed in the basic and general tracks with courses of study which did not prepare students for college. In the poorest communities, there were no honors tracks.

At the other extreme of the income range, in the neighborhoods where the median family income was \$10,374 about 95% of the

children were placed in the honors and regular tracks and there were no basic tracks.

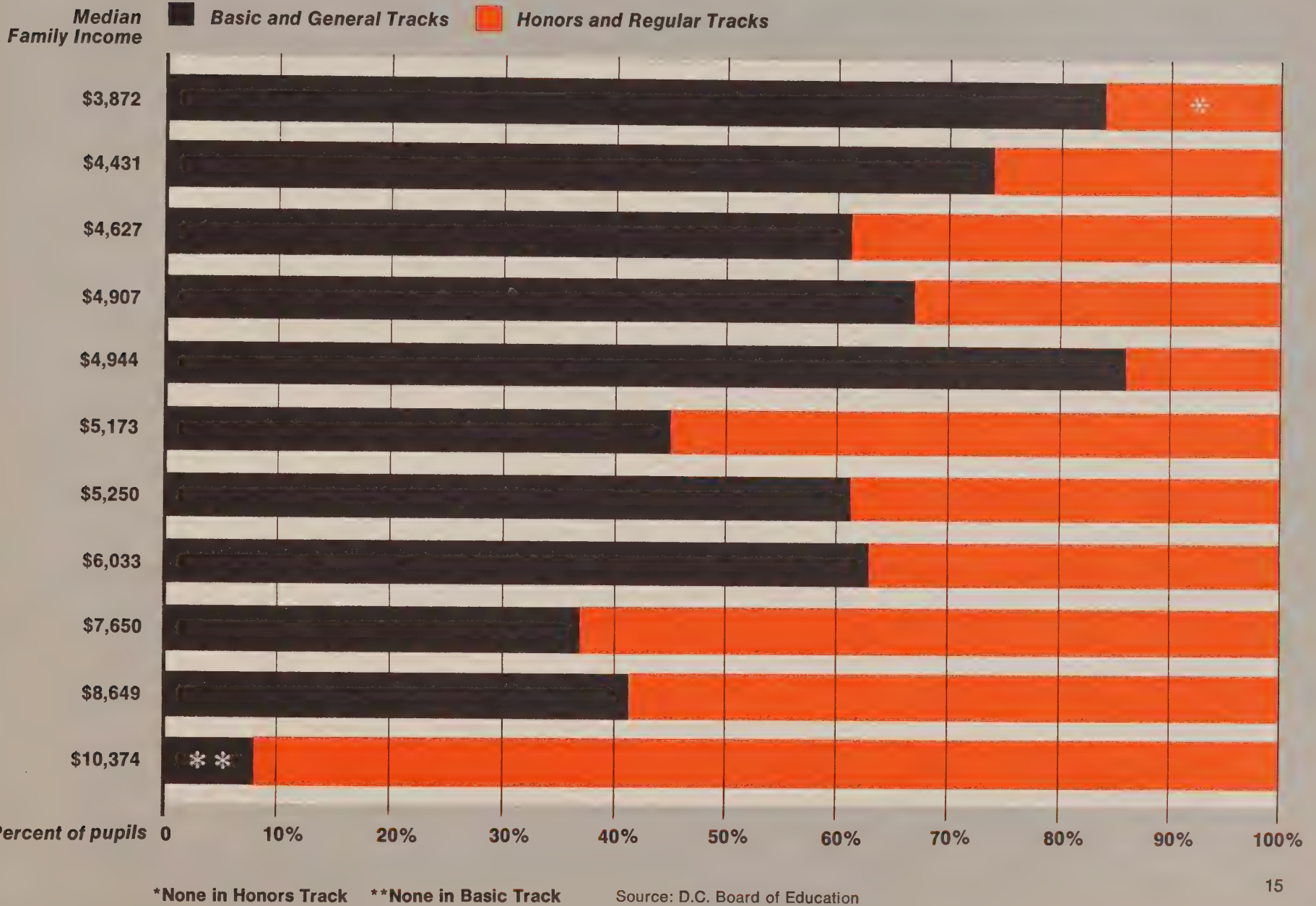
When procedures for placing students in tracks were challenged in the court, and when the school administration was charged with placing children in the basic and general tracks without testing, the administration instituted a crash testing program. Of the total number of children tested, about 66% were found to belong in the regular track rather than in the lowest two tracks to which they had been assigned.

In 1967 the United States District Court of the District of Columbia declared this track system to be unconstitutional.



Chart 5. D.C. Public Schools

# Median Family Income and Pupil Placement in the D.C. Senior High Schools, 1963-64





## The Children—“Ability Grouping”

### question:

*How were Washington elementary school children selected and placed in the honors track?*

### answer:

**The data show that in 1966, the Washington public school administration selected and placed the elementary school children in the honors track primarily on the basis of race.**

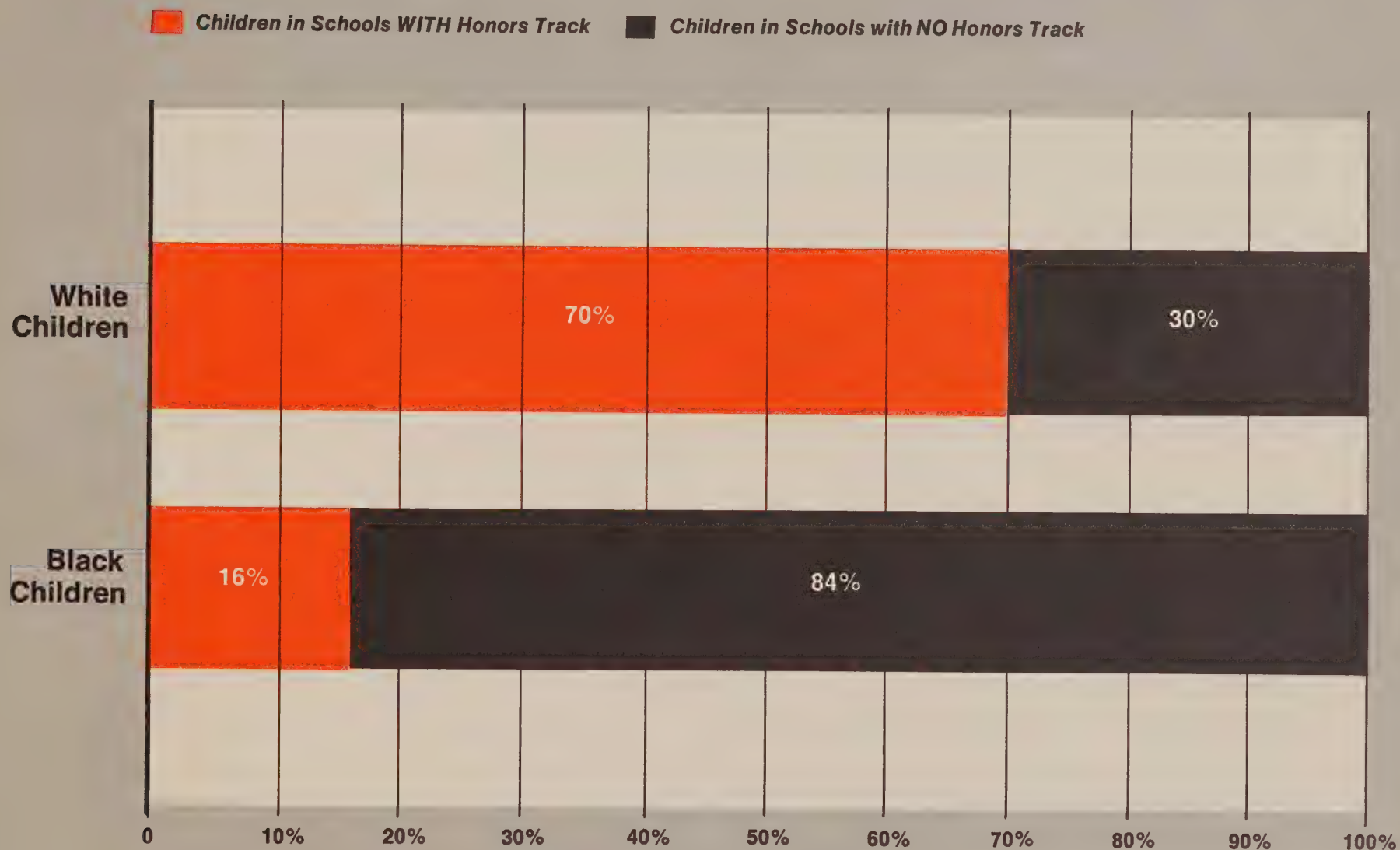
### analysis:

Chart 6 shows the percentages by race of elementary school children in the schools with honors tracks for the school year 1965-66. According to the data, 70% of the White children in the public elementary schools at that time were in schools with honors tracks, while only 16% of the Black children were in schools with honors tracks.

An overwhelming majority of the Black elementary school children (84%) were confined to the two lowest tracks, basic and general, and attended schools which did not have honors tracks. Only 30% of the White children were so situated.



# Percent of Elementary School Children in Schools with Honors Tracks, by Race, 1965-66



Note: Children in Special Education Classes not included. Source: D.C. Public Schools



## Books Per Pupil

### question:

*Are regular text books distributed equally among elementary students in the Washington public schools?*

### answer:

**Data published by the school administration indicate that in 1969 there was an unfair distribution of books among the elementary school children.**

### analysis:

Chart 7 shows the 15 lowest and the 15 highest elementary schools in Washington ranked according to the average number of text books per pupil in 1969. Library books were not counted in this survey.

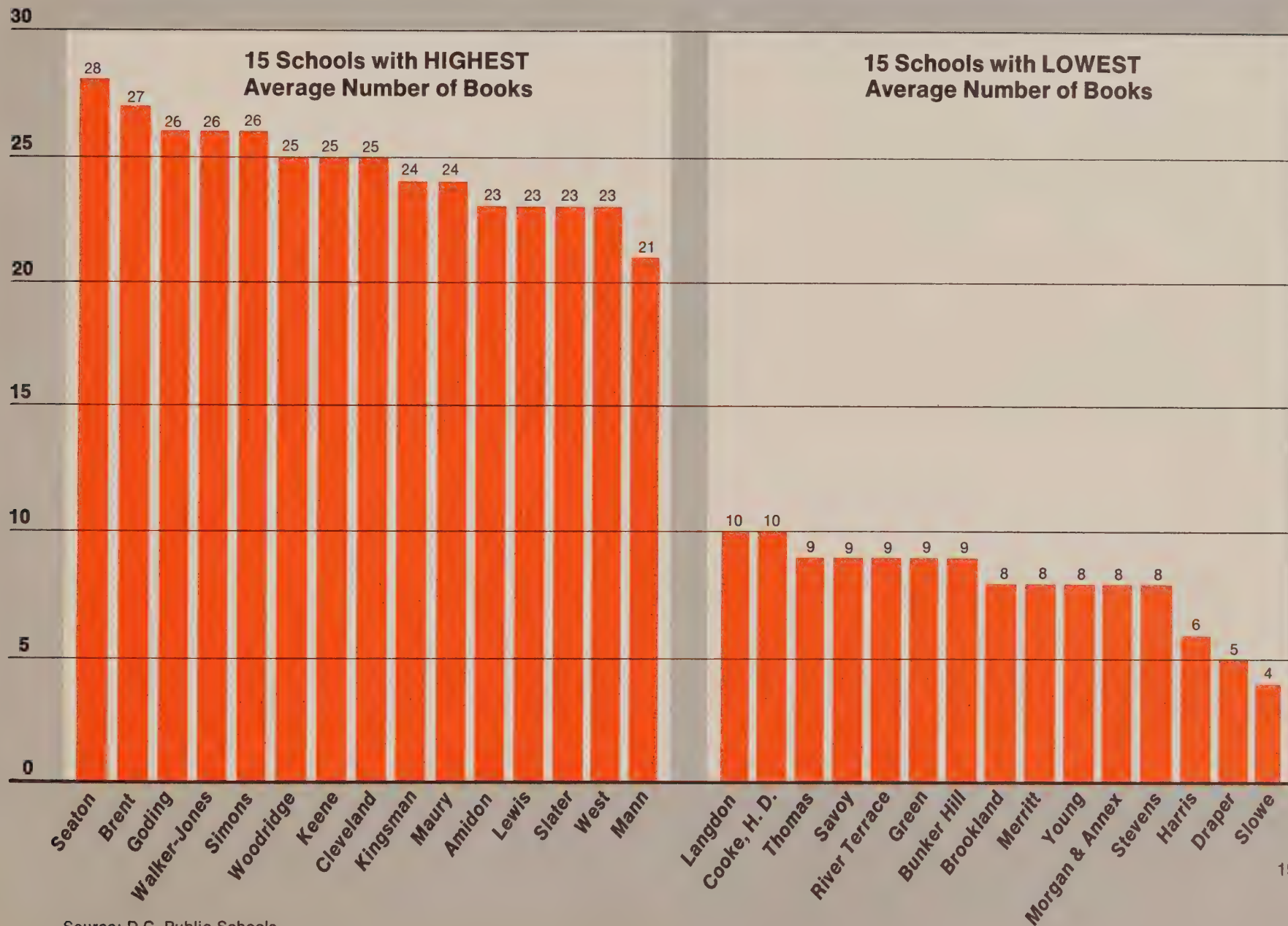
In the 15 lowest schools, the average number of text books per pupil ranged from a low of 4 at the Slowe Elementary School to a high of only 10 at the Langdon Elementary School. Among the 15 highest schools, Mann Elementary School ranked low with 21 books per pupil, and the Seaton Elementary School registered a high of 28 books per pupil. Measured in percentages, the data show that the Seaton Elementary School provided each child with an average of 85.7% more books in 1969 than did the Slowe Elementary School.

In requesting this data, we also asked for a numerical breakdown of textbooks by date of publication. Although not reflected on the chart and data revealed not only a surprisingly unequal distribution of books, but also the fact that 55.8% of textbooks in all elementary schools were more than five years old. In a primarily Black community, this gap can become a serious barrier to learning since few books published prior to 1965 even mentioned the existence of Black Americans.

Although the number of books per pupil does not alone predict reading ability, it can be another useful indicator of individual school inequities and curriculum priorities (i.e. one school on Chart 7 reported 154 dictionaries and 10 literature books for 944 students; another listed only 622 mathematics books for a total of 1,441 students).



# Average Number of Books per Pupil, Elementary Schools, 1969





## Regular Budget Funds

### question:

*Does the Washington public school administration allocate equal funds to elementary schools regardless of neighborhood income level?*

### answer:

**Students attending schools in wealthier neighborhoods received a higher per capita expenditure of public school funds in 1965 than did those attending elementary schools in poorer neighborhoods. Data published three years later reveal very little change in this unequal pattern of expenditure per pupil.**

### analysis:

In Washington, neighborhoods with the lowest average incomes are primarily Black, and neighborhoods with the highest average incomes are primarily White.

Chart 8 shows that in 1965, elementary schools in lower and moderate income neighborhoods (under \$9,000) had average expenditures per pupil substantially lower than those in the higher income

areas (\$10,000 and above)—\$306 contrasted with an average of \$396 in the wealthier neighborhoods, about 30% higher.

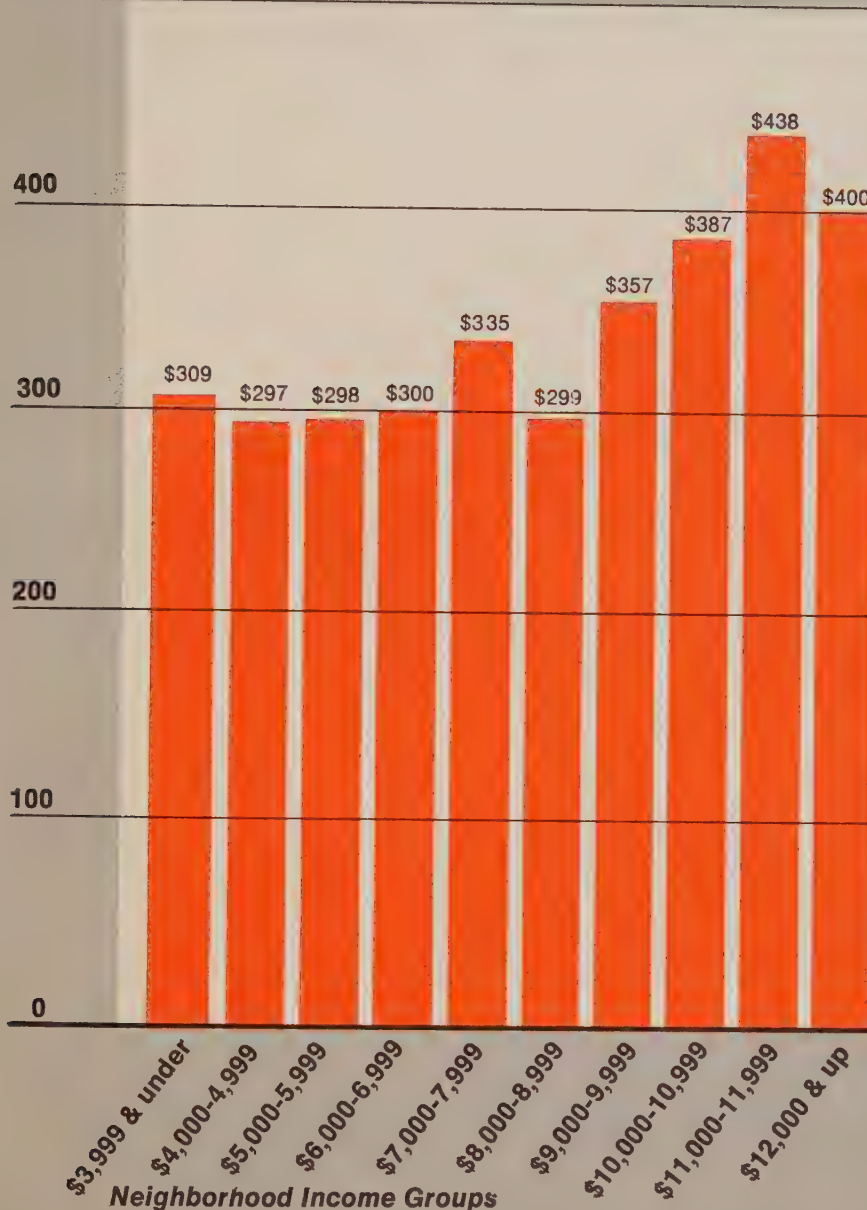
Chart 9 shows that three years later, in 1968, the general pattern remained the same, although the gap had narrowed. The overall average expenditure per pupil in areas of less than \$9,000 income was \$391, contrasted with \$442 in areas of \$9,000 income and more.



Chart 8. D.C. Elementary Schools

**Average Expenditure per Pupil in the Elementary Schools, by Neighborhood Income Groups, 1965**

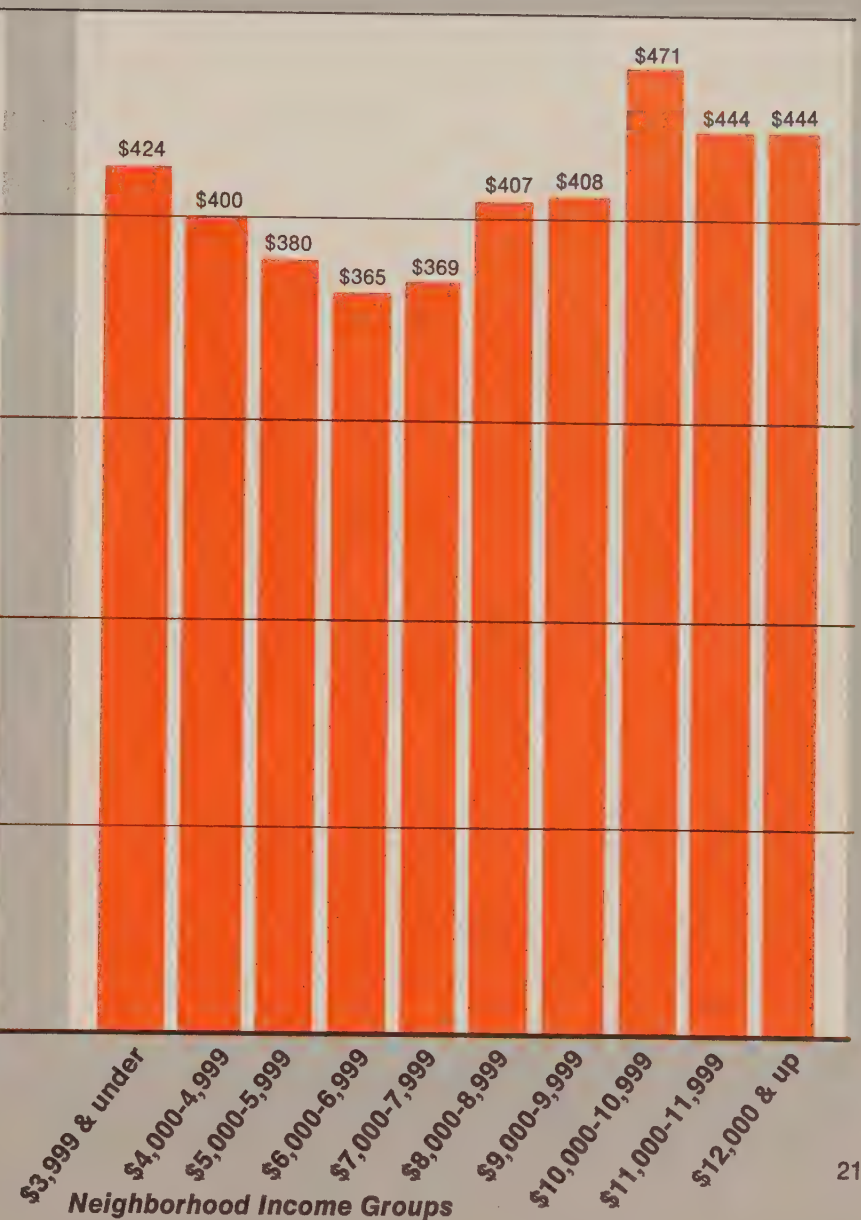
Dollars  
per pupil



Source: House Committee on Education and Labor.

Chart 9. D.C. Elementary Schools

**Average Expenditure per Pupil in the Elementary Schools, by Neighborhood Income Groups, Fiscal Year 1968 \***

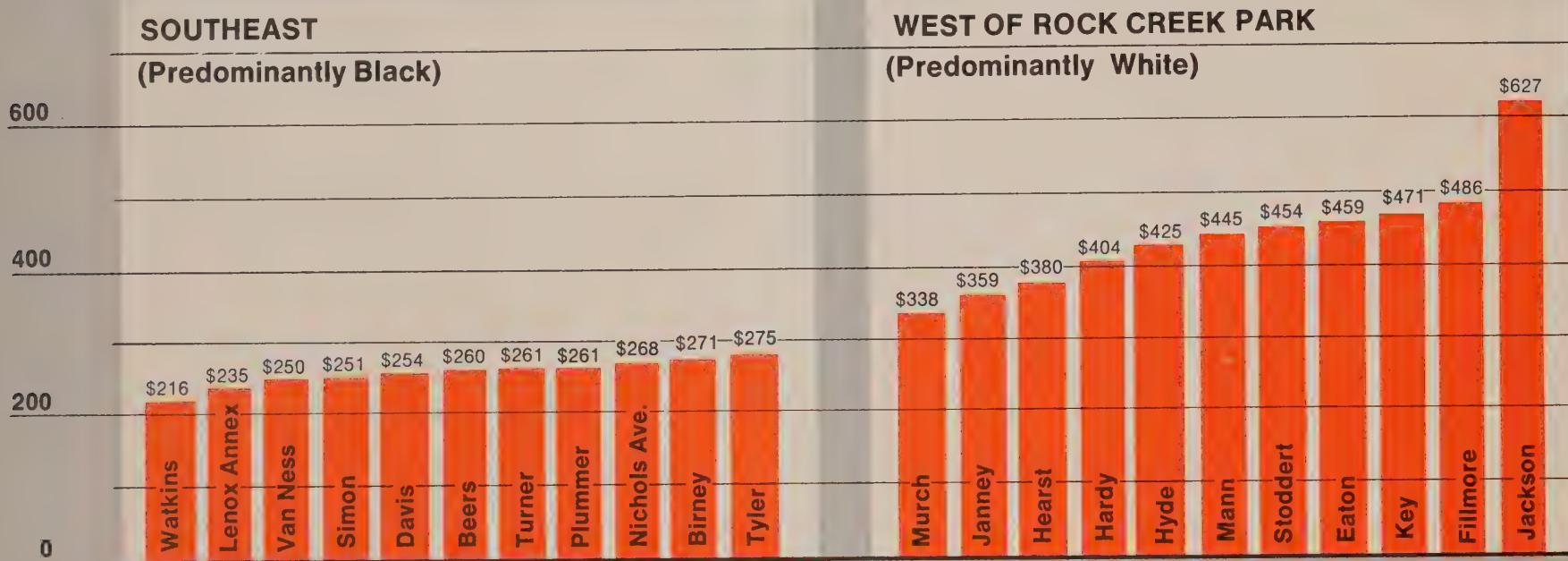


\* Regular budget funds only. Source: D.C. Public Schools



## Expenditures per Pupil in Selected D.C. Elementary Schools, 1963-64

Dollars per pupil



Source: D.C. Board of Education

### Regular Budget Funds

question:

*What are the average expenditures per pupil in elementary schools in a predominantly poor and Black community compared to the expenditures per pupil in elementary schools located in predominantly White and affluent communities in the same school district?*

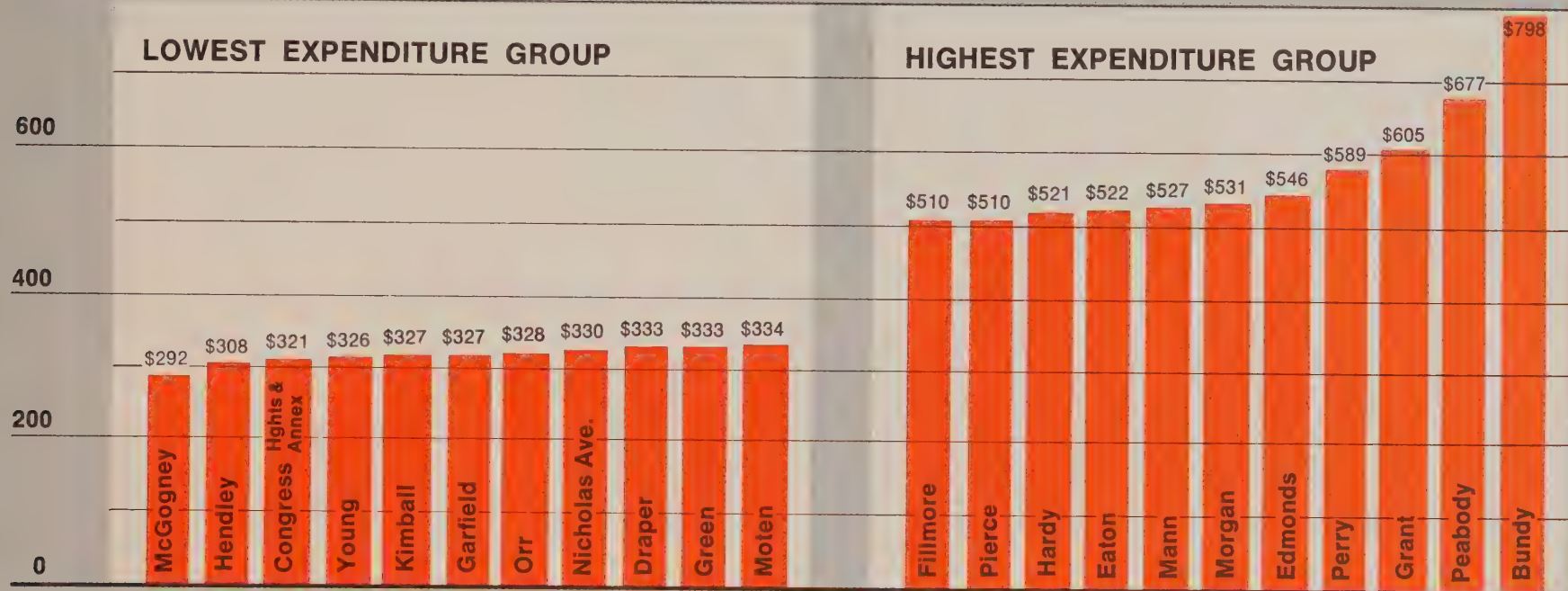
answer:

The Black Southeast elementary schools of Washington received much less than a fair share of the resources available to the public schools in 1963-64. The predominantly White schools west of Rock Creek Park received twice as much money per pupil as the poor Black schools. In 1968, the picture was relatively the same.

Chart 11. D.C. Elementary Schools

## Expenditures per Pupil in Selected D.C. Elementary Schools Based on 1968 Regular Budget Funds

Dollars per pupil



\*In 1963-64 the spread between the highest and lowest schools was \$411. The above data from 1968 show that the spread has increased to \$506.

### analysis:

Chart 10 shows expenditures per pupil in selected Washington elementary schools during the school year 1963-64. The chart shows that the highest expenditure per pupil in any school in the predominantly Black community equaled only 81% as much as the lowest expenditure per pupil in the schools located in the predominantly White community. The differential in expenditures per pupil between the lowest school in the predominantly Black community and the highest school in the predominantly White community amounted to \$411.

Chart 11 shows expenditures per pupil in selected Washington elementary schools in 1968. Even though new data showed there had

been a striking increase in expenditure per pupil in *selected* schools in predominantly Black areas, ten of the eleven schools listed in the Lowest Expenditure Group were still located in the District's poorest and most neglected area—Southeast Washington.

The differential in expenditures per pupil between the school receiving the highest expenditure and the school receiving the lowest expenditure was \$506 in 1968, an increase of \$95 over the spread which prevailed in 1963-64.

The differences in per capita expenditures were greater than those recorded in the elementary school systems in the States of Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, or Mississippi in either 1964 or 1968.



## Regular Budget Funds

### question:

*Is race of the children a factor in the allocation of school funds?*

### answer:

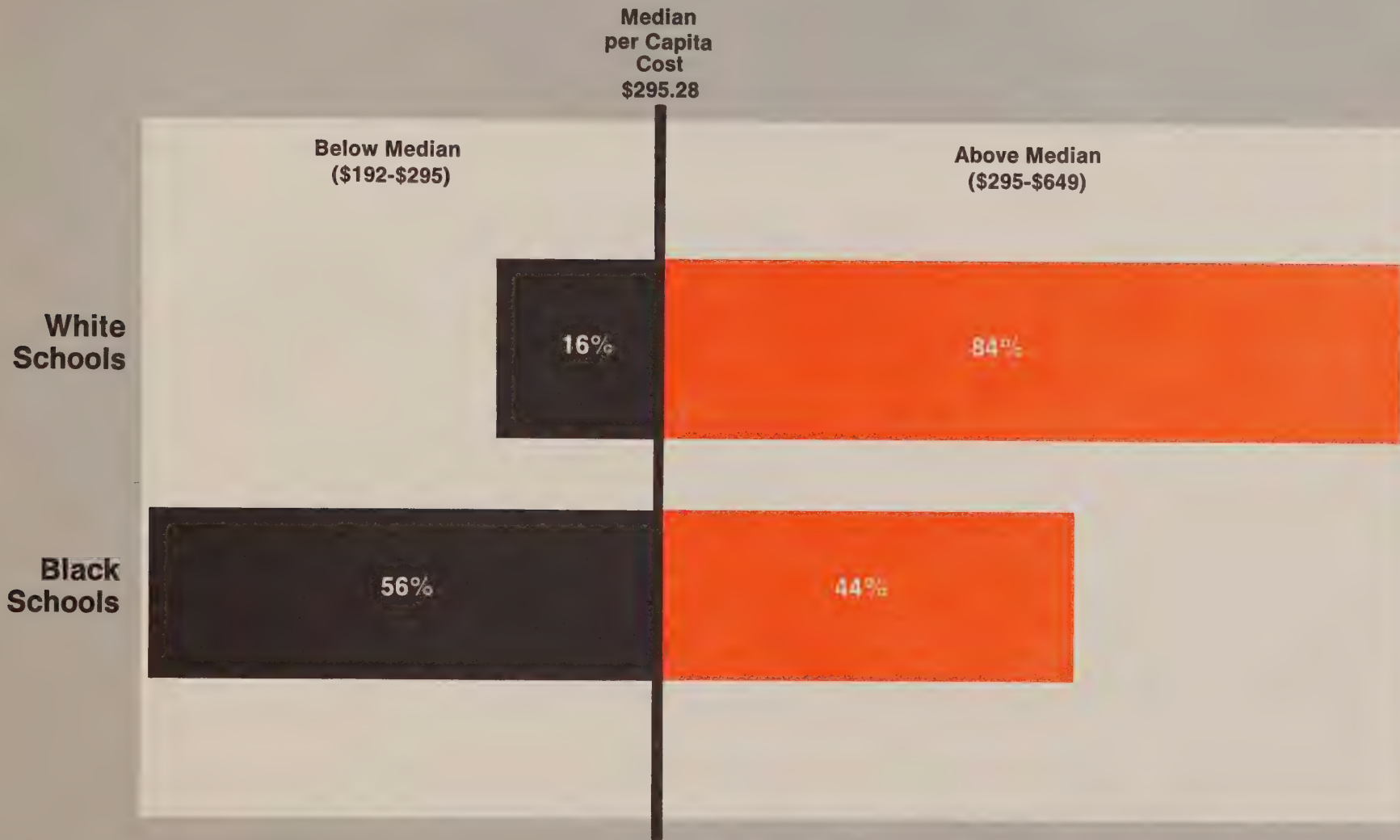
**According to data published by the Washington public schools, the race of the children in the elementary schools seemed to have been a primary factor in the distribution of funds. Of course, the Black children received less.**

### analysis:

Chart 12 shows the percent of elementary schools ranked above and below the median per capita cost (expenditure) by race in the school year 1964-1965. According to the chart, 84% of the White elementary schools at that time had per capita expenditure ranging from \$295 to \$649, while only 44% of the Black elementary schools were in the same range.

Only 16% of the White elementary schools had expenditures in the range (\$192 to \$295), while 56% of the Black elementary schools were also in the same range.

**Percent of Elementary Schools Ranked Above and Below Median per Capita Cost, by Race, 1964-65**



**Note:** Seven of the top 10 ranking schools are predominantly white. Source: D.C. Public Schools



## Federal Funds

### question:

*Special federal funds, Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), are available to school districts for assisting the most needy students—an addition to regular budgeted funds. Have such federal funds been used legally and effectively in the Washington elementary schools?*

### answer:

**The largest proportion of federal funds were spent in elementary schools with the highest per pupil expenditures from the regular budget.**

### analysis:

Federal funds are spent on special projects such as remedial reading programs, cultural enrichment programs, individual instruction, breakfast and hot lunch programs, and library development programs. Most of these funds are appropriated under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Title I funds in Washington are supposed to be used in a compensatory fashion. That is, they are to be spent on the children in the schools in the poorest neighborhoods.

Dr. James Allen, the former Commissioner of the United States Office of Education, suggested that ESEA funds should be cut off from those school districts which have not equalized expenditures per pupil from regular budget funds.

Chart 13 shows pupils and expenditures in schools above and below the median expenditure per pupil, per school, in 1968. At

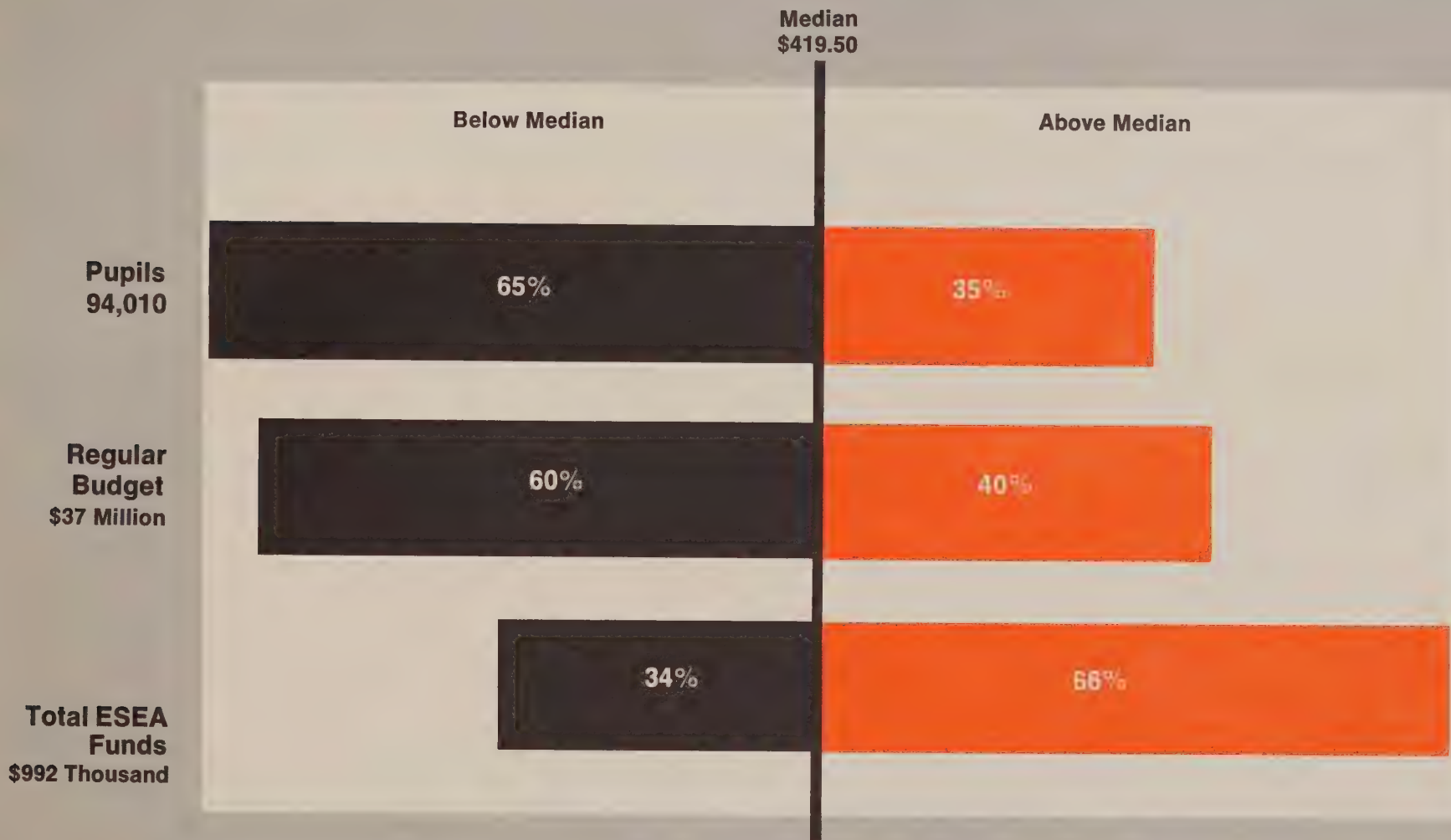
that time there were 94,010 pupils in the Washington elementary schools. Sixty-five percent of those pupils were assigned to schools which had expenditures below the median expenditure per pupil. The chart shows that these children were in schools which received only 34% of ESEA (federal) funds.

Thirty-five percent of the children were located in schools at the other end of the spectrum above the median expenditure per school. This 35% of the children received a major proportion, 66%, of the federal funds appropriated under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

The middle bar on the chart shows a disproportionate expenditure from regular budget funds which indicates that the Washington public school system has not yet equalized expenditures per pupil from regular budget funds.

Chart 13. *D.C. Elementary Schools*

**Pupils and Expenditures in Schools Above and Below the Median Expenditure\*  
per School, 1968**



Military Road School not included.

\*Median expenditure based on ESEA plus regular budget funds. Average expenditure—above median, \$470; below median, \$368.

Source: D.C. Public Schools: Superintendent's letter dated May 26, 1969.



## Federal Funds

question:

*How are federal funds (Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) distributed in the Washington elementary schools?*

answer:

**ESEA funds are primarily spent in the elementary schools receiving the larger amount of regular budget funds.**

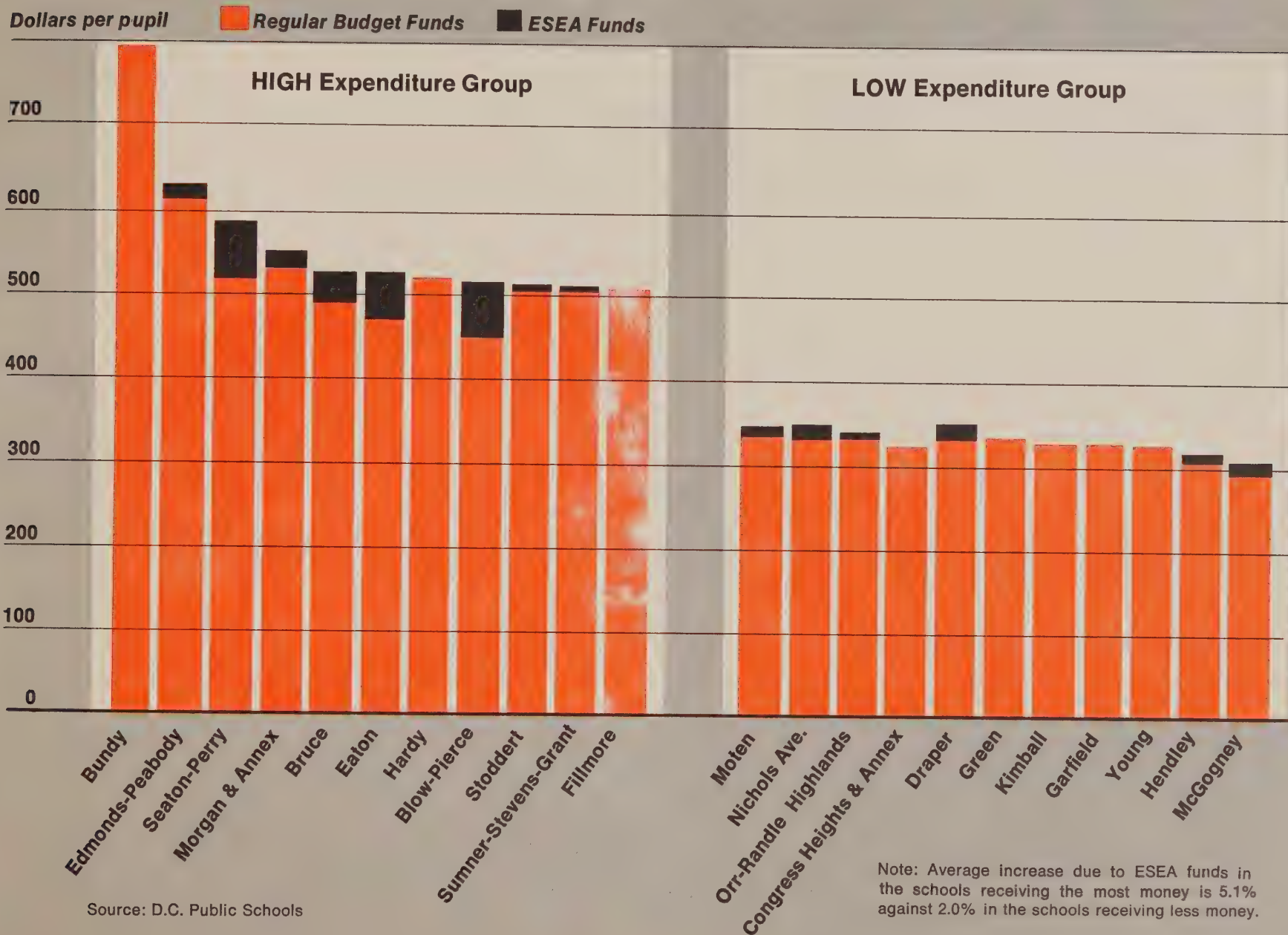
analysis:

Chart 14 shows per capita expenditures per pupil in selected elementary schools for the year 1968. The chart lists eleven schools in the high expenditure group and eleven schools in the low expenditure group. The expenditures in these schools include ESEA funds. The primary points illustrated here are that funds from the regular budget of the Washington elementary schools have not been distributed according to the intent and direction of Congress and the Office of Education.

The schools in the high expenditure group are receiving more than twice as much ESEA money as are the schools in the low expenditure group. According to the U.S. Office of Education, federal ESEA funds should be used primarily as compensatory funds for schools in poorer neighborhoods after regular budgeted funds have been equalized.

Chart 14. D.C. Elementary Schools

# Expenditures per Pupil in Selected D.C. Elementary Schools, Fiscal Year 1968





## The Children—Dropouts

### question:

*What is the dropout rate among high school students? Why are these students leaving the school system?*

### answer:

**Over a five-year period, more 16-year-old students dropped out of school than remained to graduate. Most left because of lack of interest and poor attendance.**

### analysis:

Chart 15 shows the total number of dropouts by cause for 1960-61 and 1964-65. In 1965, the largest number of students dropped out for lack of interest. The second largest number of dropouts in that year occurred for economic reasons. The same was true for the school year 1960-61.

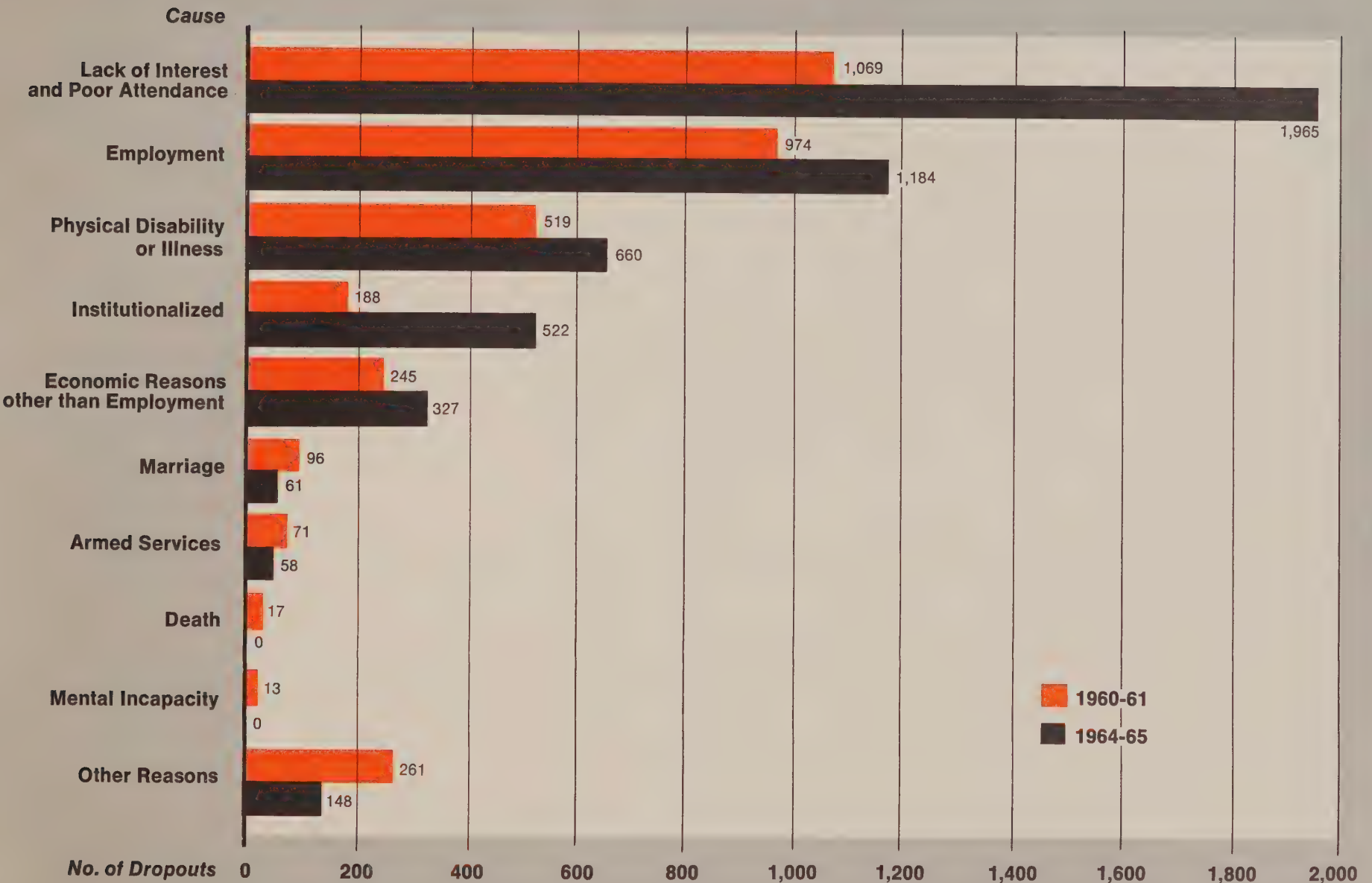
The Committee on Education and Labor of the United States House of Representatives estimated in a *Task Force Study of the Public School System in the District of Columbia as it Relates to the War on Poverty*, June 1966, that over the five-year period from 1960 through 1965, the dropout rate ranged from 36.4% to 40%.

The school administration has stated that there are no up-to-date available data on dropouts by cause. However, an analysis of the data which they have published shows that over the five-year period from 1965 through 1969, students dropped out at a rate of about 38.8%

A dropout is a young person who, sometime after passing his 16th birthday, quits school and does not graduate.

Chart 15. D.C. Public Schools

# Total Number of Dropouts, by Cause, 1960-61 and 1964-65



Source: D.C. Public Schools and House Committee on Education and Labor.



## Reading Levels

### question:

*Does the distribution of educational resources, reflected by the number of dollars spent per pupil, have a direct effect upon childrens' reading test results?*

### answer:

**Fourth grade reading test scores, when presented along with average expenditures per pupil, clearly indicate a pattern of less money—lower reading scores.**

### analysis:

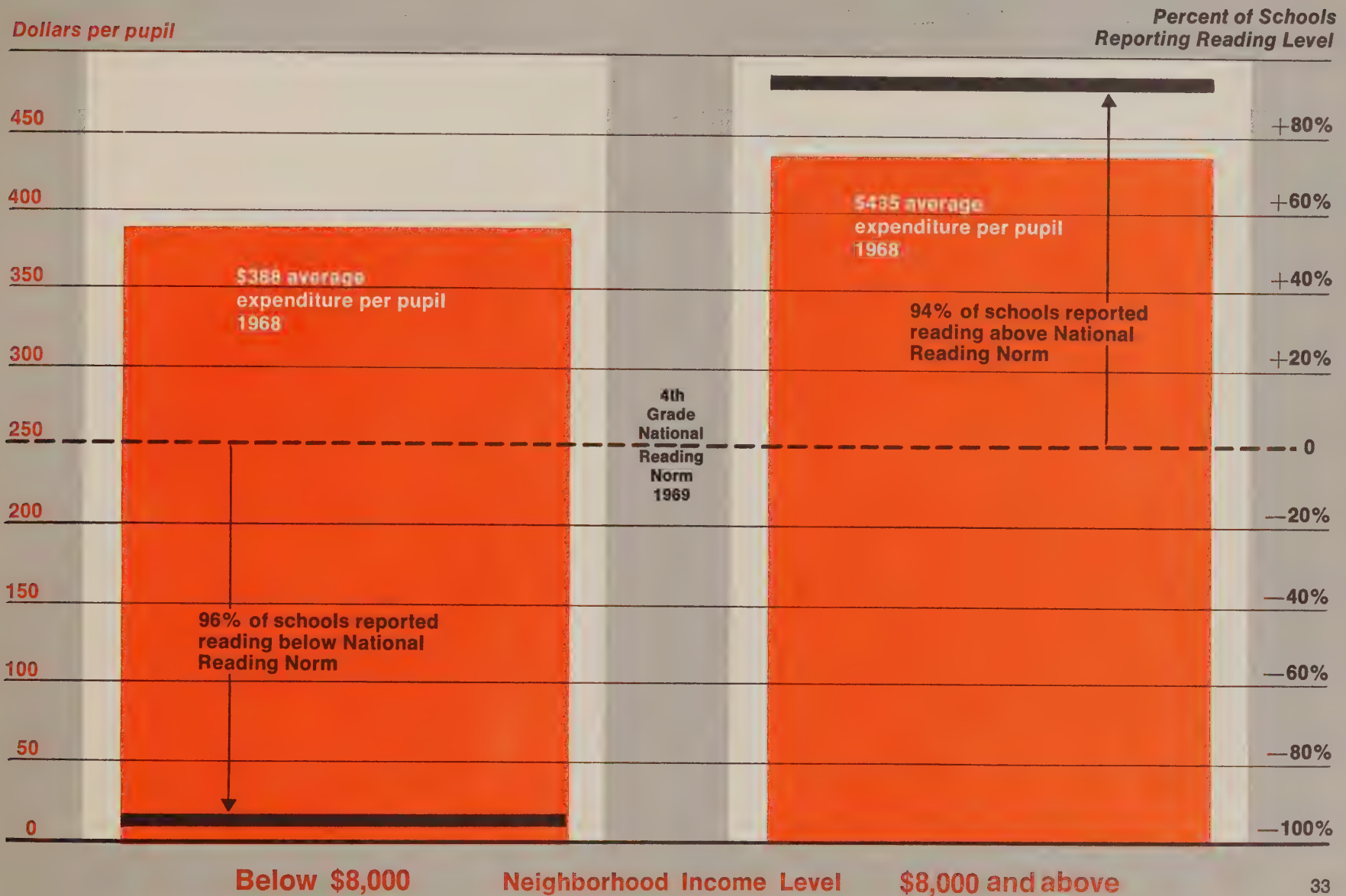
Chart 16 shows average expenditure per pupil in the elementary schools by neighborhood income groups for 1968 and 4th grade reading levels for 1969.

The chart shows that as the income level goes up, the reading levels of the children go up. In the poorest neighborhoods 96% of the schools reported that their children read *below* the national norm, and that the average expenditure per pupil was about \$388.

In the richest neighborhoods 94% of the elementary schools reported reading scores *above* the national norm. The average expenditure per pupil for the richest neighborhoods amounted to some \$435.

A further analysis of the data on reading scores for elementary school children shows that in 1966-67, 72% of the schools reported that their fourth graders read below the national norm. By 1968-69 these children had reached the 6th grade. The data show that by that time, 77% of the schools these same children attended reported sixth grade reading scores below the national norm. Thus, the longer children remain in the Washington public schools, the lower their reading performance becomes.

# Average Expenditure per Pupil in the Elementary Schools, 1968\*, by Neighborhood Income Level and 4th Grade Reading Level, 1969







## A Parting Word:

Parents and others should not wait until they have the “necessary community organization” to launch an attack upon their public school problems. The children’s cry is urgent. Organizations are too often slow and cumbersome. Five or six determined people can begin the collection and evaluation of the needed data and be quite effective.

There is no time in the future at which these problems can be solved; the challenge on behalf of THE DAMNED CHILDREN is in the moment and the time is always right now.



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*The following list of references provides examples of the various types of data available to a city school system. Those listed with an asterisk are suggested as background reading for persons interested in developing a graphic presentation of their own school system.*

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To all of the children of the Washington schools who have openly rebelled against the continued insensitive programmed retardation in public education which they sensed would end in their complete destruction.

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*Portrait of the struggle—Hobson makes a point.*

Washington Star photo

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